

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

OF

POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART.

Fourth Series

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 202.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1867.

PRICE 1½d.

THE ARRIVAL PLATFORM.

A RAILWAY, I believe, has not as yet been made use of as an image of Human Life. It is tempting too, with its First, Second, and Third Class passengers; with its through trains and its short trains; their smooth and easy journeys; their occasional halts and even retrogressions; and their not unprecedented smashes. Matrimony might perhaps be symbolised by the junction stations; and Celibacy by a single line. I suggest these hints in the rough for my less fortunate brethren of the pen who are in want of ideas, and who, when one is thrown to them by a man of genius, so well know how to make use of it. They spin it out like copper-wire. They are welcome to do so with my new type of human life thus gratuitously presented to their notice; but let them beware. They can't make any mistake about the Terminus—I see them smacking their lips over *that* already; it will be the Grave, of course; or perhaps they may venture upon taking that liberty with a tunnel: 'we pass from light to darkness only to emerge into light again.' But where they must be very careful is in the matter of their Arrival and Departure platforms. Human life and a railway have no parallel in this respect, nay, they afford a striking contrast. In life, the Departure Platform is of comparatively small importance; we hasten from the rich man's death-bed to welcome the heir. It is the incomer (and his income) about whom the fuss is made. It is around the Cradle—the Arrival Platform—that the gossips and the gift-bringers most do congregate, and not around the Grave.

Now, with a railway, matters are precisely the reverse. It is the Departure Platform that engrosses public attention, and presents that moving picture which Mr Frith has so admirably transferred to canvas. The folks who figure there have time to look about them, and take some interest (after their luggage is labelled) in what they see. On the other hand, we are whirled into the terminus, and turned out on the opposite side of the station—the Arrival Platform—dusty and

tired with our journey, in no humour for observing anything, and only eager for a cab. Thus it is that the A—P— has never been sung by poet, painted by painter, or indeed noticed by anybody except the policeman whose duty it is to see that 'no carriages pass this way.' I think it was the public statement upon the wall to that effect—namely, the forbidding the entrance of vehicles—which first led me to explore this bourne from which no traveller has as yet done anything else *but* return. No, not (to my knowledge) has one even written about it, though that is, now a days, a bold thing to say. And yet, to the reflective mind, a place where vehicles are forbidden to enter, and yet from which vast quantities of vehicles emerge, surely affords an object of interest. How is this apparently inexhaustible supply kept up? Are the cabs manufactured on the premises? Please to observe the closeness of the reasoning here. I don't say are the horses, or the cabmen, manufactured also. Why not? Because there is no necessity for so tremendous an hypothesis. It is only the vehicles which are forbidden to enter. As a horse (so far as the words of the prohibition run, and I should like to try the case uncommonly)—as a horse, I say, or as a man, I have a right to enter and attach myself to the vehicle that is awaiting me. You follow me, I hope, so far. But here a fresh difficulty presents itself to a mind which is perhaps somewhat over-subtle (like Mr Gladstone's), but which, I may add, never falls into the error of beholding a matter from only one point of view. How do the private conveyances get there? (This would scarcely have occurred to a person not accustomed to mix with good society—among what is called 'carriage-people.') My wife's second-cousin, the Marquis of Carabbas, and my personal friend, Lord Tom Noddy, always find their carriages in waiting. How, in the name of (independent and indeed, as respects those noblemen, princely) Fortune, was this effected?

I had circumambulated the particular railway station to which I refer, and convinced myself that there was no other gateway—and indeed there was none. Surely, with this mystery to solve, I need

offer no further excuse for repairing to the Arrival Platform, although I expected nobody particular by Express, nor 'Mixed,' nor Parliamentary. Of course, a train had just come in (which happens at so great a terminus every five minutes), and the stream of vehicles that met me was unceasing. Everybody was in a hurry, and going the other way, except myself. How the shabby old cabs could carry their mountains of luggage, and not a roof fall in, was of itself a wonder! They must do it some day; rotten wood and rusty iron can't last for ever under tons of boxes, and bags, and baskets. When and where, then, does it happen? Or are the occupants so squashed out of all human form that no evidence can be taken before the coroner? Also, why (this is really an interesting question)—why do people wait to kiss one another until they get into a Hansom cab, and not interchange that greeting upon the platform? They are surely not under the impression that they are in a less public position, and in a place of concealment? Why, they are placed as in a picture at the Exhibition, and might very well be labelled 'Spring-time,' 'Young Love,' or 'Pairing-time Anticipated,' elevated, framed and glazed, and offered to public view; they are exposed to the observation of all below, as well as of the man above, who is regarding them through his little trap-door with humorous enjoyment. They *will* do it; he knows by never-failing experience they will, and keeps his eye on them accordingly. Nevertheless, I am bound to say, that if people must kiss in a cab, they are right to choose a Hansom. The folks in four-wheels, who offered even more examples of this ceremony, encountered considerable difficulty from the ends of parasols, walking-sticks, and fishing-rods, with which they made involuntary jobs at one another's eyes. So that when family parties embraced all round, as often happened, and one had a bird-cage, and another a rose in a flower-pot, I was quite pleased to know when it was over, which I generally did by their passing the backs of their hands over their mouths.

Of course these were not the upper Ten Thousand, who know better than to exhibit emotion. They leaned back in their carriages, just as though they had just come from a drive in the Park, instead of having been dragged by the iron horse through earth and over water. This splendid immobility is not altogether the result of blue blood; there is no occasion for folks who are waited for, to hurry themselves; for those who have everything done for them, to perspire; for those to whom a pound is of small consequence, to look painfully sharp after a penny. If Sir Soyer Tranquille himself had to travel by third-class, and the porter cried: '*Now, stoopid!*' (as he infallibly would), and perhaps added a push between the shoulders, it would be difficult for that faultless exquisite to maintain his grand air. If he was not sure of having a seat with a back to it for a journey of five hundred miles, Sir Soyer would not dawdle in to the station with but half a minute to spare, but would be there in plenty of time, like other poor 'parliamentary' folks.

It is the poor who are the most picturesque and interesting of the loiterers on the Arrival Platform. For those they have come to meet, there is neither carriage nor cab; they have come themselves to assist them with their luggage. A barrow they are not allowed to bring, I suppose, but some of them have ropes with which to sling the boxes. There

are a mother and daughter come to meet their Sally, who has a week's leave from her place in the country, and they are both in the highest spirits. But, for the most part, these watchers are sad. Here is a widow, weeping silently, as though she awaited the arrival of her husband's corpse; and here a younger woman, not in mourning, but with the most haggard and restless face. She has already scanned the time-table half-a-dozen times, running her finger down the long lines, to make sure of the hour at which the train comes in from *Ultima Thule*; she meekly asks the sub-traffic-manager to make sure, and he tells her, not unkindly, though he is surly enough to look at, that it will not be here yet awhile; there is another train to come in before it.

There is one old man, bent nearly double already, and who, I hope, will not attempt to carry anything for anybody, with a russet-cheeked dame, his wife, and they are come to meet their only son, they say, who is a sailor, and has been all round the world; but they are not buoyant about it at all, and I am afraid they have a scapegrace offspring. When he does not arrive, according to promise (when their disappointment is sad to witness), I am sure of this.

Considering that almost everybody can now a days take care of themselves while travelling, there is a considerable section of the coming passengers who have friends to meet them; these are most numerous among the second class; among the first, servants fill the place of friends; and with respect to the third, no large proportion of working-people can spare the time to come. It is pleasant, as the train glides swiftly in, to watch the watchers scanning the carriage-windows, and the nods of recognition and smiles of welcome that ensue. '*How are you?—How's George?—I thought you would never come.—And where's that darling baby?—In the first van, under all the boxes, for it was put in first.—How's your mother?—I've brought you some flowers, you see.—Name, Robinson, four parcels.—I've nothing but this carpet-bag.—We shall never get into one cab, I'm sure.*'

The conversation is like a page out of one of those phrase-books which profess to be a substitute abroad for the knowledge of a foreign tongue. Then all is bustle, crowding, clatter.—'*That's my box; no, that.—The man's an idiot.—Hi!—O gracious me, you don't say that; I saw it put on at the junction.—All right; fourteen and the perambulator.—As sure as my name is Wiggins, I'll write to the Times.—'Whish' goes the steam, 'bouf, bouf!' and out backs the snake-like train to make room for its successor. The last two joints of its tail, however, a horse-box and a truck with a private carriage in it, are detached before this takes place, and we loungers watch the animals being taken out with the interest of children in a Noah's Ark. The sleek creatures look a little dazed, as well they may; and the coachman, who is evidently not under the eye of 'master' (and much less of 'missis'), looks a little dazed also, and not sleek. He has an empty bottle of gin in his hand, and is smoking a short black pipe; he is dressed in private clothes, no livery, and looks as if he had just come out of a public-house, instead of a horse-box. But he is not drunk—not to say drunk,' observes the inspector, trim, slim, with whom I converse—and it is marvellous how soon horses and carriage become one, and trot away. It is an open landau, full of my lady's cloaks and*

furs, and the coachman thrusts his gin-bottle among them for safety, evidently intending to use that travelling-flask on another occasion.

All the late arrivals have gone now: the thunder of wheel and hoof has ceased; there remain only a watcher or two, who, like the haggard-eyed young woman, have come too soon.

Presently, from the deep mouth of a dark tunnel, creeps up cab after cab, omnibus after omnibus, as though an ogre had swallowed them, and they were escaping while he was asleep: so that mystery is solved. The entrance for wheeled conveyances lies in some unseen street.

Then the jerking of a wire, and a 'ting, ting' in the look-out man's box at the end of the platform, and somebody cries out, as though announcing some very eminent personage, 'The Express!' Rapid in all its movements, this train disgorges its living freight with extraordinary quickness; the porters seem to pay it more ready deference—perhaps because fully half the passengers are first-class (poor people cannot afford to pay extra fares for mere quickness); and the luggage, too, if you have an observant eye, you will remark is more spick-and-span than that we last saw hurried away. More portmanteaus with 'warranted' upon their leather; more hat-boxes; and not one of those hair-trunks, in a bald or moulting condition, which so unmistakably contain the outfit of the young woman from the country. On this occasion, also, the two semi-private broughams, with 'Three-and-six the first hour, and half-a-crown the second, including driver,' inscribed upon them on a hanging board, are chartered by folks who have come up to town for a few hours to 'shop' or make calls, and don't choose to be seen 'in one of those horrid cabs.' The whole affair takes little more time than a popular slide of the magic-lantern remains before the sheet. My poorer friends, with whom, of course, it has no practical connection, gape at it exactly as if it were really some spectacle of the sort, except the haggard-eyed young woman, who again reverts to the time-table, and runs her finger up and down it with patient solicitude. Her friend from *Ultima Thule* will be among the next arrivals.

Was it her father—was it her mother—
Was it her sister—was it her brother—
Or was it a dearer one
Still, and a nearer one
Yet than all other,

that she thus so anxiously awaited?

'The Parliamentary' is late—an incident not unparalleled upon most lines. It stops everywhere, you see; and if there is any ailing carriage or invalid horse-box, the station-master has them coupled on to it, for time can be no object to third-class folks; moreover, it has to be shunted here and there, to let its betters pass by, and also to wait for them, if late, unless it wants to be doubled up and knocked to lucifer-matches. When it does arrive, 'dragging its slow length along,' the interest among the station-people is decidedly languid; and their language not Parliamentary.

'Now, then, look alive there, and claim your luggage'—sea-chests, washerwomen's baskets, bulging red and blue bundles, lockless carpet-bags, tied up with string! 'Not that way, Stupid. Come, clear out, and none of your sauce.'

Jack, with his hat retained at the back of his head solely by capillary attraction, hitches at his

trousers (and so would you, if you didn't wear braces), and gives them sea-slang in return. Jill, bent upon securing her little property upon any terms, even uncivil ones, does not mind their 'imperence.' But, on the whole—and what with the engine putting in his impatient word—Babel is reproduced in a very successful manner. There are few cabs taken, but among them one by a party of tars, who put their traps inside, and occupy the roof; the crowd gradually melts away, in omnibus or on foot. All this time, the haggard-eyed young woman flits along the train, from carriage to carriage, twice, and even thrice. He whom she seeks has not got out; he must therefore be still within. The whistle shrieks; the long line bumps and backs; and the platform is once more deserted.

'Is there no other train, please, sir, from *Ultima Thule*?'

There is anxiety in her tone, weary disappointment, wretchedness—but not despair.

I would give much to be able to say 'Yes,' but I am not possessed of the requisite information.

The inspector, slim, trim, who has overheard the question, relieves me from my embarrassment. 'I am afraid not to-day, my dear,' says he, with no coarseness of familiarity, but, on the contrary, a certain tender pity: 'perhaps he will come to-morrow.'

'Thank you, sir,' sighs she, and glides away—sad, silent, ghostlike—out of the empty station.

I turn to my official friend for an explanation of this social phenomenon—for such it clearly is. 'Well, sir, the poor thing is touched'—he put his finger to his forehead—and it's best to humour her. She came here one day—years ago—to meet this same identical party as she waits for now. He had got out at some station for a drop of drink, and somehow or other, he was run over. They brought his dead body up—her sweetheart's, I suppose it was, but it was before my time—instead of the young fellow she had expected; and it drove her out of her mind. I believe the Company behaved very handsome to her, so she's in want of nothing; and there are particular orders that nobody is to meddle with her. Of course, nobody would wish to do it, poor thing. She always behaves very well, and is never in the way. But she comes, sir, and waits on this here Platform every day, as regular as clockwork, for that young man, as has been dead and buried these five years.—Stand back, if you please, sir; here's the 4.42.'

ONE OF THE FAMILY.

CHAPTER XXIX.—MRS MURPHY'S LETTER OF THANKS.

WHEN Valentine Blake had occupied his new post for about a month, he received the following letter from Mrs Murphy, though not addressed (as we who are acquainted with that sagacious lady may well imagine) by her own hand:

DEAR SIR—I am obliged to you for your long and careful communication. I can now picture for myself exactly the state of affairs in my old home; and since it seems to prick your conscience to narrate such harmless details, I will not press you to continue them. The likeness of young Bentinck to Miles Ripson, whom I perfectly well remember, is curious enough when coupled with the fact of his being his foster-father; and the similarity would probably seem more striking to me even than it

does to you, since my recollection of Miles is when he was about Bentinck's age. I could not help smiling over your account of poor Dr Warton. His unhappy fondness for strong liquors must indeed have reduced him to dotage before his time, since he could talk such nonsense to you over his cups. I am glad, I own, and agreeably disappointed, to hear that Evelyn Sefton has grown up so sensible a young woman. I always thought Mary Ripson a foolish person, whose small modicum of intelligence was perverted by an ill-judged course of reading, but (as you also remark) she is incapable of committing anything worse than folly. You tell me little concerning my brother Ernest and his wife: they are doubtless the same as they always were, making allowance for the hardening effects of years; at the same time, I am very sensible of your carefulness to oblige me in forwarding all particulars, for which perhaps it may be in my power at some future time to express my gratitude in a more solid manner. I will not, I again repeat, solicit any further favour from you of this sort, but have only to request (for your own sake), that if you should happen to see my son Claude in the neighbourhood of Sandalithwaite, you will be careful not to exhibit any signs of recognition. He is about to spend his holiday in the Lake district, and I have no doubt that curiosity will lead him to the place where his mother spent several years of her maiden life, and where she first met his father. The same motives of precaution will of course lead you to destroy this communication.—I remain, dear sir, with many thanks from your obliged and faithfully

SELINA MURPHY.

P.S.—I open my letter for a reason which you will very likely consider very insufficient: I ought, perhaps, to be sure that your own good feeling would render my mentioning the matter unnecessary: but be very careful not to repeat to others, even in joke, Dr Warton's drunken boast that he had my brother under his thumb. You must be aware from your own observation that such is not the case, and, in short, as you observe, that the old man was beside himself when he made the statement; but the repetition of such talk could not but do him harm at the Hall; and I have a genuine regard for the poor fellow—the remains of that *tendresse* for him, perhaps, which he always attributed to me.

Valentine Blake read this communication with an amount of attention which the writer could not certainly have anticipated. He had written Mrs Murphy but one letter—though one of considerable length—in pursuance of his promise to put her in possession of the state of affairs at Sandalithwaite, and this was the reply. It astonished him in more than one respect. In the first place, it was final: Mrs Murphy had unexpectedly given way (where a person of her character might be expected to have objected) to his reasons for discontinuing the correspondence. Therefore, whatever that might be, she had gained her point in the transaction. He must have afforded her, without knowing it, some information of more value than mere gossip, which was all that he had intended to convey. There was scarcely a line in what he had written that Mr Ernest Woodford might not have read himself: Valentine was incapable of reflecting upon his employer, and far less upon his wife; he had borne as lightly as possible even upon the shortcomings of Bentinck. With respect

to him, he had written that the faults of his bringing-up seemed to lie with Mary Ripson rather than with his own father and mother; and that even now her well-meant devotion to him bore harmful fruit; but he had never used the expression attributed to him by Mrs Murphy, that Mary was 'incapable of committing anything worse than folly'; the idea of her committing anything worse had never entered into his head. Why, therefore, had Mrs Murphy thought it necessary to defend the housekeeper from a prejudice which he had never entertained, under the pretence of confirming an opinion he had never expressed? This was not at all like Selina Murphy.

Still less in accordance with the character which that lady bore among all who were acquainted with her, including the tutor himself, was her solicitude for Herbert Warton's interests. Valentine's conscience smote him for having retailed to her a certain conversation which he and the doctor had had together when he was seeing the latter home, after what he euphemistically described as 'rather a wet evening,' at the Hall; but the whole affair had appeared so ridiculous, that Valentine had enlarged upon it, glad to fill up space with a mere joke in a communication which was for the most part distasteful and embarrassing. He did not now remember with distinctness exactly what the doctor had said; but without doubt he had described the Black Squire—who had only a few minutes before been treating him little better than a dog—as a person who was completely under his control. It was the discrepancy between the fact and the boast which had tickled Valentine's fancy; but somehow the remembrance of it did not amuse him now, when coupled with the postscript before him. Was it possible that Warton had really any hold over the master of Dewbank Hall? Apart from the doctor's own assertion—and that while in a state of intoxication—the tutor had not seen the least sign of such a thing; on the contrary, Mr Woodford often treated Warton with a disrespect unbecoming in a host towards his guest, and in a manner incompatible, as it would seem, with his being in any way in his power: while with Mrs Woodford, it was true, he seemed to have great influence, but not greater than that which is generally enjoyed by a medical man over his patient. And yet this postscript of Mrs Murphy's made Valentine uncomfortable, especially when he remembered that one of the things she had requested of him in Rhadegund Street was to favour her with any scraps of the doctor's gossip, 'who could tell her more of what she wanted to know than a whole file of Cumberland newspapers.' Had he (Valentine) then unwittingly hinted to Mrs Murphy of something important? Otherwise, why this unlooked-for gratitude upon her part?—nay, even a gratuitous suggestion of solid reward. Something harshly exultant—a mocking tone of triumph—seemed to run through all the letter. Finally, Claude Woodford was coming down from London *incog*. If mere love of natural scenery was about to induce that young gentleman to visit Lakeland, which was much to be doubted, he could scarcely be given credit for that sentimental feeling for locality, which, according to his mother, would bring her 'Woody' to Sandalithwaite. Upon the whole, Valentine liked this piece of information least of all the communication conveyed.

Having no tutorial duties for that morning, since it happened to be Bentinck's birthday, and that

young gentleman had received permission to spend it in his own way, as a spectator of the sports at Carlisle, he went forth alone, with the letter in his pocket, chewing the cud of thought; and after some aimless wandering over the hilltops, found himself overlooking Blennerdale, in the recesses of which lay the wad or black-lead which was worth its weight in silver. The valley looked very fair, clothed in its fresh summer verdure; but the particular hill in which the treasure was found bore many a sign of the havoc which wealth always plays with the simplicity of nature. Scarce any of the original surface-soil had escaped the spade or the pick, and in a score of places, a vast heap of clay or earth shewed where an entrance had been effected into the hill itself. Only one, however, of all these burrows had been found to contain in any quantity the precious wad. Valentine, who had been taken over the place by Mr Woodford, very much in the spirit of Hezekiah when lionising the Babylonish envoy, could recognise the exact spot from where he stood—a huge black dot in the very centre of the hill-side—though it was no longer marked by the presence of the wad-workers, teeming like ants around the opening of their nest, and, like them, passing in and out in single file, there being only just room within the narrow passage for a man to pass his fellow. As a show-place, indeed, the wad-mine was not imposing: you went on in damp and darkness, save from the ray from your guide's lantern, perhaps not very far; but since you had to stoop throughout the transit, and ever and anon stumbled against the props with which it was necessary to shore up the sides and roof, the expedition seemed a long one. Your reward was first to have pointed out to you the rich black seams, which would perhaps have glittered could the sun have shone on them; and secondly, the unspeakable relief of finding yourself, when all was over, safe in the open air. You might then consider yourself a favoured person, if you were not subjected to the operation of searching, from which no one connected with the mine, except George Adams the manager, who had accompanied his principal and Valentine upon the expedition in question, was exempt.

But there was no longer a reason for these precautions. Mr Woodford had put his determination into effect, and closed the wad-mine, following the example sometimes set by the proprietors of the Keswick lead-mine, in order to prevent the cheapening of that rare commodity. There was not a single workman to be seen upon the whole hillside; nor did the echoes which usually repeated the strokes of the pick from every side return any sound. The huts, too, where the men were housed at the foot of the hill, were all abandoned; and the door of the tool-house, situated upon the hill itself, not far from the adit of the mine, was closed; the smoke that issued from the chimney of the manager's house was the only sign of human habitation to be seen. Its contrast with the busy scene he had last witnessed here, made the quiet seem even more complete than it really was, and besides, there was that stillness in the summer air which is the herald of a storm. With all his experience of the solitudes of nature, Valentine felt that he had rarely looked upon a spot so lonely. When the rain began to send forth its skirmishers in the shape of such large cool drops as promised a serious down-pour, the tutor was still at too great a distance from the

deserted settlement to arrive there with a dry skin; he made, therefore, for a rude outhouse of un-mortared stone that stood not far off, and endeavoured to shelter himself under its projecting slates; but that protection being insufficient, he was driven to commit an act of burglary: the door defied his efforts, but he broke open the rusty padlock which confined the windowless shutters, and having climbed within, closed them against the fury of the storm. Then seated on an empty barrel that stood in the place, he took out Mrs Murphy's letter, and read it once again, which even in that semi-darkness it was now easy for him to do; and as he did so, doubt and suspicion—though he scarcely knew of what—clouded more and more his mind.

He had been sitting for some time immersed in thought, when suddenly a sound struck upon his ear that roused him at once from his reverie, and caused him to look up at the closed shutters with the utmost extremity of surprise. A man's voice was no such wonder in Blennerdale, and it was likely enough that a man should shelter himself under the outhouse eaves as he had done: it was the tones of the voice which struck him with such astonishment, for they were those, he felt convinced, of his pupil, Bentinck Woodford, whom he had beheld with his own eyes set out (only a few minutes before he himself left Dewbank Hall) in his dog-cart for Carlisle. For the moment, he thought it was by no means out of the range of possibility that the young gentleman might have used deception with his father, and planned some expedition elsewhere; but then he reflected leisurely, as he had walked over the hills, that that was so much the shorter way, that no wheels could have arrived in Blennerdale within the time or near it. Perplexed and astonished, he moved cautiously to the window, and through a chink in the shutters perceived two men, doubtless taking shelter, as he had supposed, beneath the eaves. The one was George Adams the manager; the other (whom he had seen upon his visit to the mine, but had not spoken with) he recognised at the first glance, notwithstanding that his back was turned towards him, as Miles Ripson.

CHAPTER XXX.—THE MANAGER'S SECRET.

'I was coming to your house, Adams,' said Miles in hoarse dogged tones, so similar to those familiar to the tutor's ear, that he had only to shut his eyes to be at once transported to his own pupil's room; 'but since I have met you on the road, I may just as well say my say where we are.'

'Better to say it here, Miles Ripson,' answered the other; 'better to meet you anywhere than under my own roof-tree.'

Here Miles turned round to give his companion an ugly look of scorn and hatred; and as Valentine caught his features in close profile, it seemed to him as though he had slept some Rip Van Winkle sleep of twenty years, and was standing face to face with Bentinck Woodford.

'And why not see me in your fine house, George Adams?' inquired the miner with a sneer. 'Is it because, half a lifetime ago, a pretty girl thought me a properer man than yourself?'

'No, Miles, it is not on that account,' replied the other, speaking with forced calmness.

'Ah, you're afraid of losing your dignity, perhaps,' continued Ripson bitterly, 'if you, the manager, are seen in confidential talk with a common workman; though, let me tell you, I have had more

money to spend in my time than you will ever scrape and save out of your salary, however large you may think it.'

'I know all that, Miles; I know you have spent a great deal of money—other people's as well as your own. But my house is the house of an honest man, and I don't wish any rogue to set foot in it.'

'Rogues go to prison, George Adams, and I have never been there, though I could send some people thither just by opening my lips.'

There was a long pause; then, 'What is it you want?' asked George with averted face.

'There now, you're getting more sensible as well as more neighbourly,' rejoined Miles with a sneer. 'Well, since the Black Squire has turned us all off yonder at a week's notice, I want some sort of a house to live in. I'm not particular, you know, except so far that it must be rent free.'

'Mr Woodford has particularly ordered that all the workmen's houses shall be closed; he wishes that nobody should have any excuse for remaining in the neighbourhood of the mine.'

'Afraid of the wad being taken, is he?' observed Miles coolly. 'I thought you had made fast the adit.'

'Yes; that has been done.'

'Then why be so particular about keeping the huts empty, Mr Manager?'

'That is my employer's business, not mine, Ripson. You must lodge at the inn, as you used to do, or, at all events, not here. I cannot, without permission, let you stay on yonder, and I will not.'

'Your orders, however, only refer to the huts, I suppose?'

'Of course not; but there is no other dwelling-house in Blennerdale.'

'No; but there is the tool-house, on the Fell itself; and that's where I mean to live, Mr Manager, until the Black Squire sets us to work again.'

From red to pale, from pale to livid white, and then to passionful red again, turned the Manager's cheeks. 'That you shall never do, Miles,' answered he. 'I have shut my eyes too much. I do believe that the last wad we lost found its way—if you did not put it there yourself—into your pockets. I despise myself, when I think that I have so long kept silence, and thereby become a partaker in your crime.'

'And yet not in the spoil,' resumed the miner with a sneer. 'That does seem hard indeed. Having such a very tender conscience, Mr Manager, it is strange that when you had taken the queen's shilling and wore her scarlet'—

'Take you care, Miles Ripson,' broke in the other with smothered fury. 'When I think of what I have suffered at your hands, a devil strives to rise within me, that takes all the good I own to keep him down. If you drive me once so far that I take you by the throat, God help you!'

'Since the subject seems to be so distressing to you,' resumed Miles coldly, 'although I care not for your anger one penny-piece, we will speak of it no longer. Besides, you know already all that I could say upon the matter, having, I daresay, thought over it once or twice yourself in all its bearings. For my part, I do not blame you even. The law, to be sure, takes a black view of the offence in question; and if the thing were known, the consequences would be serious enough. To have to give up one's pleasant dwelling-house, with everything within it that a man need want—except a wife—and exchange it for a prison-cell: that would be

hard lines indeed. Then, to be called bad names—I will not mention the word, for one cannot be too careful of such secrets—after having been used to respect from folks beneath one (such as I), and to have confidence reposed in one by our employer; to be made a by-word of in the place where we had held up our head so high these seventeen years: all this would be hard to bear; and yet'—here he changed his mocking tone to savage menace—'it will have to be borne—mark that, George Adams—it and much more, unless I get the thing I want.'

The Manager gasped for breath, as though engaged in some severe physical struggle, and loosened the knot of the handkerchief about his throat.

'Tell me the truth, man, if truth be in you,' answered he with effort: 'why is it that you ask me this, Miles Ripson?'

'It is my whim, that's all,' returned Miles with a malevolent chuckle. 'When one has power, one likes to use it—or at least I do—even though there be nothing to be gained. Perhaps I am tired of living at the *Wrestler's Arms*, when not at work here; perhaps I want to save money by occupying yonder hut, in order that I may sooner return to my own house, which Mary Harrison brought me at her marriage; you remember Ander Nook. There is no end to the reasons a man has for putting his enemy to an inconvenience. You may give which you like to any who ask questions about it, but yonder house I mean to have.'

'I can only guess at one reason—unless it be as you say, the mere annoyance to myself, you devil—that sets you on to this,' replied George slowly. 'You design to steal the wad. Now, let me warn you—although I fall short of my duty in letting you know it—that no such attempt can by any possibility succeed. Not only has the adit been closed up, but sealed, and it is to be visited by the Kendal agent daily, so that it is impossible that an entrance can be effected without immediate discovery.'

'And if I were taken in the fact, you would be somewhat compromised, eh, Mr Manager?' answered Ripson: 'that is well thought of. However, you may set your mind at ease thus far: I have no such intention as that with which you credit me. I have as honest a dislike of the inside of a jail as you yourself, George Adams. So, let us consider this little matter settled without more ado. You are good enough, in return for my shutting my mouth, to let me occupy this tool-house—which is of neither use nor profit to your employer for the present, and in which he has not forbidden you to place a tenant. Good. I shall take up my quarters there to-morrow.—See, the rain is over, which brought us together, and I am going to take a look at my new residence. You were walking in the same direction, I think. What!—you have had enough of my companionship? Well, that is uncivil, particularly as we are about to be such close neighbours for the future. The only two men in Blennerdale should be upon better terms. However, just as you please, Mr Manager; and do not hesitate, for my sake, I beg, to keep a sharp eye upon the wad.'

With a low grating laugh, the miner turned upon his heel, and took his way towards the deserted works. The Manager stood watching him for a few minutes with white lips, that murmured anything but prayer, then slowly moved away in the contrary direction.

'Now, I wonder does Selina Murphy hold the strings of this mystery also?' ejaculated Valentine, relighting his pipe, which had gone out during this interview; 'or does the air of Sandalithwaite engender secrets in all who inhabit the place? If George Adams is really in that black fellow's power, I pity him. "The queen's shilling and the queen's scarlet," said he; now, what did he mean by that?—Ah, I think I see.'

Emerging from his place of shelter, and making the shutters fast behind him as well as he could, Valentine looked cautiously about him: a dip in the valley hid Ripson from his gaze; but he could see the Manager toiling up the peat-path by which he himself had come, as a heavy heave makes the most agile limbs to seem to toil. It was not fatigue that was oppressing him, for when he reached the summit of the steep ascent, he did not halt for a single instant, but plodded on out of sight, quite unconscious that Valentine was already pressing fast upon his footsteps. Nay, when he came up with him upon the noiseless mountain-turf, and touched him, George did not even so much as look behind.

'You have got what you want,' exclaimed he, shaking himself free, 'and you had better not mock me with more words.'

'It is not the person you are thinking of, Mr Adams,' said the tutor in the grave but winning tones peculiar to him; 'it is I, Valentine Blake.'

'I beg your pardon, Mr Blake,' answered the other respectfully. 'I have just parted with a man upon ill terms, and I thought that you were he, and bent upon annoying me further.'

'No, indeed. He was your enemy, but I am your friend, and will prove myself to be so, if you will only trust me.'

'Thank you, sir,' returned the Manager drily; 'I am sure you are very kind.—I hope the squire and his family are well. Mr Bentinck, I suppose, is gone to the felling at Carel; he dearly loves the sport.'

'Yes. You used to be a wrestler once, yourself, did you not, Mr Adams?'

'Years ago, sir. I have not tried a fall since'—

'Since you threw Miles Ripson in the ring at Sandalithwaite,' said Valentine quietly as the other hesitated. 'I have heard all about that, you know; and how he married Mary Harrison, although she was engaged to a better man; and how he treated her, and wasted her little property; and yet, with all his luck, he is but a common workman, and you are his master—although in another sense, unfortunately, he seems to be yours.'

'I don't know what you mean, Mr Blake.'

'Yes, you do, George. It is bad to have secrets such as compel one to tell lies. You had better be frank with me, my friend. I am one, I assure you, who can feel for an honest man, who is somehow or other obliged to favour Miles Ripson.'

'It was not I who gave him his place again at the mine, Mr Blake, which people talked about so, after what had happened with him and the wad before: it was the squire himself, or rather his lady.'

'Oh, Mrs Woodford exerted herself for him, did she?' answered Valentine thoughtfully. 'I was not, however, referring to that, but to your letting him have the tool-house on the Fell.'

The Manager stopped short, and staggered, as though he had received a blow.

'Great Heaven! Mr Blake, who told you that? Has he had the insolence to boast so soon?—'

'No, George,' interrupted the tutor very gravely.

'I should think, considering what we suppose he has in view, that it would be his interest, at least as much as yours, to conceal the matter. What indiscretion can you have committed, unhappy man, that has placed you in the power of a wretch like him—indiscretion that causes you to become his partner in a scheme of robbery?—Nay, George, it must have been a crime.'

'No, sir, no,' answered the Manager eagerly; 'you need not think that; although, indeed, my punishment, if it were discovered, would be that of a criminal. Since you know so much, Mr Blake, I will tell you all; but do not reveal my secret, unless you wish to see me dead. I could not bear that he should tell her of my disgrace; and it would wring her own heart too—yes, I do think it would—since I incurred it all for Mary's sake, and all, ah sir, in vain.' The Manager cast himself upon the ground, and hid his face for a little without speaking, while Valentine stood by regarding him with pitying eyes.

'It was long, long ago, sir; near twenty years ago, when I came up on survey in these parts, as a Sapper and Miner. I did my duty as a soldier, as I have writings to witness; but soldiering was not to my taste. When I came among the mountains hereabout, it seemed like heaven to me; and I thought if I could only live here, I should be the happiest man on earth. (I have lived here a long while now, alas! and found it very different; but then I was young and foolish.) But more than that, Mr Blake; I was in love. You may not know what that is; God grant you never may, if the end of it is to be the same as mine; but I felt as though I would have sold my very soul to wed Mary Harrison. And she loved me—or at least she told me so, and I believed her—in return. I was ordered south, and had to leave her; but on the eve of my departure, she promised to marry me. Never in any heart was despair so mingled with delight as in mine that day. For a man of my years—I am just forty, sir,' continued George simply—'to talk in this fashion, may seem very foolish; but unless I tell you the whole truth, I shall seem worse than I am. Some can love one woman, and yet love another at the same time almost as well; and some can love and lose, and forget or console themselves with another; but I gave my whole heart into Mary's keeping, sir, and, Heaven forgive me, she has got it still. Well, we two plighted troth: she was to write, and I was to write, often, constantly: and when I had saved enough money for my discharge, or she should be in a position to purchase it (I saw nothing degrading in that, sir; no, nor, I confess, in anything which might bring our marriage about), then I was to come back to Cumberland, to claim her as my bride. I went away; but though I wrote, as I had promised, I never got one letter in reply—no, not a line. What I suffered from that silence, can never be told, sir—never. At last, it grew unbearable, and I resolved to find out for myself whether my love was dead or false. I could not obtain leave of absence, and indeed my mode of life, always distasteful to me, had become so hateful, that I determined to quit it altogether. We were stationed at a southern port, and I so contrived my desertion that it was supposed I had gone off to America by a steam-ship. At all events, I knew it was in the highest degree improbable that any one should come to look for me in Sandalithwaite. I forgot that there is no spot so solitary but that a man's

conscience keeps him company there. I came—and since you seem to know it, I may spare myself the telling you what I found. It is this man, Miles Ripson, who then robbed me of all that I held dear on earth, who now persecutes me, as you have hinted. How he came to find that I was a deserter—for I gave out that I had got my discharge—the devil, who prompts his every act, alone can tell. Perhaps he only guessed my crime, and taxed me with it at a venture; but he knows it now, and you are aware, it seems, how he uses his knowledge. You have heard my story, Mr Blake—if I have done wrong, am I not also to be pitied?

'Yes; certainly,' said Valentine with feeling: 'but I have been a soldier myself, and you must therefore not expect that I should acquit you of deceit, undutifulness, and breach of faith.'

'You cannot despise me, sir, so much as I despise myself,' answered the Manager humbly.

'I do not despise you, George. We all require allowances to be made for us by our fellow-creatures, and still more by the Father of us all. But would you not commit a fresh wrong, to hide the consequences of the evil already done? In permitting Miles Ripson to occupy the tool-house, are you not giving him facilities for robbing your common employer? What does that conscience say, George, of which you spoke a while ago?'

'I have no choice, sir, between that and degradation,' replied the Manager slowly. 'But perhaps it would be better to let him do his worst. God help me! Besides, if you have got to suspect the thing, others may do so by the same means.'

'Scarcely that,' replied Valentine frankly. 'I took shelter within the outhouse where you and Ripson were standing, and thereby accidentally overheard your talk. If it had not been for the rain, or if even the wind had set my way, and you had chanced to smell my tobacco, I should have known nothing of all this.'

'What! were you smoking, sir?' cried George, with a surprise that for the moment rapt him from his private woes. 'Then you, and I, and Miles were never so near to death as we were within this hour! That outhouse contains the powder we use for blasting in the mine, and is always fast locked up on that account.'

'I noticed some black specks upon the barrel on which I was sitting,' said Valentine calmly; 'but I took them for bits of wad. Since life has been thus lent to us, let us spend it as the Lender would have us do. For the present, since the precautions you mentioned have been taken for the security of the wad, I see no harm in letting matters remain as they are: but give me the date and place of your desertion, George.'

'O sir, what for?'

'That I may put the matter in the hands of the proper authorities.—Do not fear—or, at least, fear nothing so much as a crime unatoned for. I have some influence—or at least I have friends who have—with those who will be your judges in this matter. After so long a time, and under the peculiar circumstances, your case will, I trust, be dealt with leniently.'

'Nay, sir,' cried George with passion, 'but this is not treating me as a gentleman should. To worm my secret out, and then betray it! Who are you, sir, who thus manage other folk's affairs for them, whether they will or no? And how can I be sure that you have the wish, even if you have the power, to save me?'

Valentine Blake smiled gravely, in his gentle fashion, and leaning forward, whispered a word or two into the Manager's ear.

'If I have wormed a secret out of you,' added the tutor smiling, as the other regarded him with distended eyes, and every symptom of extreme astonishment, 'I have now given you one of my own in return, as earnest of my good intentions towards you: see, therefore, you keep it faithfully. Hush, hush! Not a word about it even to myself, man. It's a long story, and you shall hear it all some day, but not at present.—You will trust me now, George Adams, will you not?'

'Yes, sir, I will indeed,' replied the Manager, gazing into the bearded face with reverent awe, and grasping his hand with vehemence, as though to convince himself of the reality of what he saw. 'I have said that I would never believe another fellow-creature's oath again; but I do believe your word.'

SUN-SPOTS.

It is one of the most suggestive and important truths which science has embodied in the faith of philosophy, that space itself is not more 'infinite' than are the sphere, number, and complexity of those unseen influences which affect the condition of the earth both as a planet and as a home and focus of sentient life. Astronomical research has thus before it an absolutely boundless field of discovery, which, in the course of ages, it is invited and encouraged to traverse: yet may we not estimate its progress by the space it embraces, or its completeness by the range of the telescope; for their very haste to mark and note the prominent phenomena of the wide universe has prompted men to overlook the more obscure though powerful influences, which thicken the more closely they surround us, and it surely avails little that the colour and place of stars and nebulosities are known, while those multiform agencies which centre in the sun and focate in the earth itself, are as yet unacknowledged, except in the infinite variety of their results.

The telescope with its present powers has indeed sketched out a wide region for patient observation and study, to be extended only when optical science shall afford some new, unthought-of contribution to the means and appliances of sight; and astronomers have fiftly left off for a time idly re-counting the stars, and indulging in vague speculations on what is beyond their ken, for the better purpose of examining minutely those phenomena which lie within the range, though their causes may be beyond the scope of distinct vision. Such agencies have hitherto been too commonly regarded as insignificant in comparison with more brilliant discoveries, but extending research every day gives further proof of their intimate relations to the condition and destiny of our mother-earth.

We might instance the study of the laws of heat, light, magnetism, &c. as affording most important additions and aids to a science of which 'astronomy' is an inadequate title; but in this paper we shall confine our attention to certain results of direct observation that promise to demonstrate many remarkable relations between the physical condition of the sun and that of the earth, and which continue to gain increasing interest, not only for astronomers, but for all intelligent men.

Day by day, at the principal observatories in

Europe and America, is the appearance of the sun anxiously watched, and the spots which often mottle much of its surface carefully mapped out, and even photographed. And, indeed, their utility recommends such observations; for gravitation, as we vaguely understand it, is not the only link which binds our planet to the sun; and we have yet to learn how much the development and present condition of the earth are due to the action of those thermal, magnetic, and chemical influences which we have every reason to believe are intimately involved in its very existence and entire cosmical relations.

Before recounting the results of sun-spot observations, we may remark the difficulty of tracing at a distance of ninety-five millions of miles, and on a visible disc having a diameter of little more than half a degree, the condition and appearances of a body whose diameter is more than one hundred times, and surface twelve thousand times, greater than those of the earth.

It is more than two centuries and a half since sun-spots were discovered, and known to reappear. The discovery is usually assigned to Galileo, whose first work on the subject—*Epistolæ ad Valsærum de Maculis Solaribus*—is dated 1612; but the claims of the Tuscan artist may in this respect be fairly disputed in favour of Fabricius, whose treatise, *De Maculis in Sole Observatis*, was written at Wittenberg in June 1611. Harriot, in England, published his observations in December 1611; and Scheiner, a Jesuit of Ingolstadt, made some important discoveries early in 1612. Even before this time, spots on the sun had been observed by the naked eye, for Kepler is known to have mistaken one for a transit of Mercury.

Nor is it to be wondered at that these spots have not unfrequently been distinguished by the eye, when we consider the enormous dimensions of some of them. Pastorf observed one which he found to be 46,000 miles in length, and 27,960 broad; and Mayer, in 1758, saw one whose diameter was upwards of 45,000 miles, having an area greater than thirty times the entire surface of the earth. Now, it may easily be calculated that a circle at the distance of the solar surface, having a diameter of one second of arc, has a diameter of 460 miles, and contains 167,000 square miles; and such an area would form a distinct speck, the smallest that can be seen as such. Yet spots of an area greater than a thousand millions of square miles have been recorded; and these having a diameter of a minute and a half, or about one-twenty-second that of the solar disc, must have been distinctly visible to all eyes under a clear atmosphere. Even the *nuclei*, or dark central parts, the cavities through which, according to Sir William Herschel, we see the body of the sun laid bare, are sometimes of enormous extent; 'so large,' says one astronomer, 'that the earth could pass clean through such a hole without coming within five thousand miles of either side.'

In shape, as in size, these spots are extremely irregular.

The outer portion, at least, of the sun is frequently in a state of commotion, to which the most terrific storm at sea suggests only the faintest possible conception. This appears to be extremely probable, both from the motions of the spots, and from the existence of those *red flames*, which, during a total eclipse, have been observed to project from all sides of the sun sometimes to a height

of 40,000 miles. That the photosphere, or external luminous envelope, is in a continual state of undulation, is also indicated by those flashing patches of light called *luculi*, which have been observed in all regions of the sun's disc, giving an unequally shaded appearance to its surface, and producing an impression like that from the waves of the glistening sea.

The spots, however, are entirely confined to a belt of one hundred degrees within fifty degrees north and south of the sun's equator.

A single spot, as it appears under the telescope, consists usually of an irregularly shaped patch of at least three distinctly separated degrees of shading. The central is the darkest, called the *nucleus*. The *umbra* forms a broad indented margin to the *nucleus*; and the *penumbra*, of a still lighter tint, surrounds the whole. Spots are frequently collected in groups; and so many as eighty distinct spots have sometimes been counted in a single group. Some spots appear to have two *nuclei*, and in others this singular change is observed in progress. They become bridged across by an embankment and ridges of the matter of the photosphere, and having a feathered appearance in one direction.

In the neighbourhood of spots, and confined within the same limits of latitude, are certain remarkable streaks, brighter than the ordinary surface, which have been named *faculae*. Some of these waves, whatever they may be, have a feathered appearance, and though seldom straight, have been observed to extend 40,000 miles, with a breadth of forty miles. They move in the same direction, and with the same velocity as the spots themselves; and this fact tends strongly to confirm the inference, that the motion and reappearance of the spots indicate a true and determinate rotation of the solar orb in that direction.

Besides a generally uniform passage, at the rate of about 4000 miles per hour across the sun's disc, the spots are observed to have certain *proper* motions of their own, which at first sight seem to interfere with their general rotary velocity. Mr Dawes observed a large spot which revolved round its centre in twelve days; and M. Laugier of Paris calculated the proper motion of certain irregularly moving spots to be (independently of the high velocity due to the solar rotation already referred to) at the rate of 247 miles per hour. Mr Carrington attributes such proper motion to the tendency of groups of spots to recede from each other.

Spots also change in shape and size, and their duration varies from a few days to three or four months. Some appear to start into existence while you examine the solar disc, and others to fade away. Many are formed and then die out within a single transit, which lasts a fortnight. Others reappear during three revolutions of the sun, though seldom oftener.

The manner of the rise and obliteration of sun-spots is curious, and is the basis of Professor Wilson's original hypothesis of their being actual cavities. When one is being formed, the *umbra* appears before the *penumbra*; and in evanescence, the *nucleus* and *umbra* seem to get filled up irregularly, and crossed by faculous ridges. The *penumbra* is finally encroached upon by darting masses of incandescent matter, and is replaced by the general brightness of the photosphere.

Concerning the nature of these spots, it is a

suggestion as old as Maupertuis, that they are masses of the floating unconsumed scum of the incandescent fluid. Lalande supposed them to be protuberances from the interior standing out from the solar surface like our rock-islands from the sea; but the foreshortening of the nearest edges as they recede towards the sun's eastern limb, disproves this hypothesis; and it is even stated, on good authority, that the great spot of 1719 was seen as a notch on the sun's edge.

The explanation most widely accepted, especially since the time of the elder Herschel, is that they are cavities in the elastic solar atmosphere. This 'discovery' is due to Professor Alexander Wilson of Glasgow, who, in 1774, observed the foreshortening of their nearest edges, and who thence advanced the opinion, that they were holes in the sun's atmosphere, caused by masses of elastic fluid escaping volcanically from the fiery globe underneath, and thus, not only laying bare the sun's surface in the central nucleus, but also, by increasing expansion, causing that widening in their course which might account for the appearance of umbrae and penumbrae. Mr Dawes states, in confirmation of a similar hypothesis, that the inner edges of the umbrae and penumbrae appear to be massed and tilted up, as if by the action of elastic gas in escaping from the interior.

A fourth hypothesis, accepted by many eminent physicists, seeks at once to account for the spots, and to explain the genesis of solar heat—the latter a hitherto unsolved or rather unattempted problem.

Of the existence of countless meteoric stones revolving round the sun, even at a distance of more than ninety millions of miles, we have ample evidence in their periodic appearance in the middle of August and of November, when the path of the earth traverses their belt. Now, it is supposed that such meteorolites, near the sun, within and constituting the 'zodiacal light,' are continually getting entangled in their perihelion passage in the solar atmosphere; and, that thus being 'licked up' by the central attraction out of their elliptical paths, they form sun-spots during one or two revolutions, to be finally swallowed up by the all-devouring orb. It is further alleged, consistently with known physical laws, that the light and heat of the sun are maintained by and dependent upon this continual incidence of immense masses of meteoric matter.

Neither our space nor present purpose allows us to discuss the merits of this bold and comprehensive theory, further than, in passing, to satisfy the reader of its feasibility. We find that the spots are confined to the sun's equatorial zone, around which alone meteoric matter revolves in variously inclined planes: their motions, too, are various; and their prevalence periodic, and both these facts are accounted for by this theory. It has likewise been shewn by Secchi of Rome, one of the most eminent cultivators of experimental physics, that the emission of heat is greater from the equatorial belt than from the other parts of the sun's surface; and it has been found that, on an average, those years are the warmest in which a great number of sun-spots are observed. Nor need it be regarded as inconsistent with the nature of things, that even among planets the higher forms of development should be maintained by the destruction of the lower, for the life and growth of every system involves the decay and change of individual forms.

Others, again, consider sun-spots to be analogous to our whirlwinds and cyclonic storms, and allege that, in looking at them, we look down into their rarefied central vortices, which, widening upwards towards the surface of the solar atmosphere, present the appearance of cavities. Sir William Herschel, in 1801, accounted for the distinctness with which the umbrae and penumbrae are separated by supposing that in these we see the rupture of successive strata differing in their densities. Whatever may be the character of such interior envelopes, Arago has satisfactorily proved that the outer photosphere is composed of inflamed gas; for he found that the rays from the sun's edge, which leave it at a small angle, are *not* polarised, as would be the case if they proceeded from either solid or liquid surfaces; whereas the light from inflamed gas is always in a natural condition at all angles of emission.

With regard to the direction and rate of motion of solar spots, it has been found that they move from west to east in conformity with the direction of the planets, and that the sun's equatorial plane thus indicated is inclined at an angle of seven degrees nine minutes to that of the ecliptic.

Owing to certain proper motions among themselves, the *time* of revolution of different spots is subject to slight variations; yet we may fairly infer that the sun revolves on its own axis in 25½ days. Galileo, in 1612, found that a certain spot returned in 28 days; Fabricius, in his *Dialogus*, gives 27½ days; and Scheiner, in 1630, estimated the period at 27 days. These are *rough* observations, so we may allow two days for the earth's progress in the same direction as the spots during their revolution, and regard these three observations as giving respectively 26, 25½, and 25 days as the sidereal period of the sun's revolution. The following are periods of revolution assigned by eminent astronomers, that have been carefully deduced from numerous observations: Lalande gives 25.42 days; Delambre, 25.01; Cassini, 25.59; Boehm, 25.32; Langier, 25.34.

Spots are seldom seen at the sun's equator, and never in the circumpolar regions: they usually occupy belts in each hemisphere between the parallels of ten degrees and twenty degrees of heliographical latitude. Mr Carrington, who recently published elaborate results of eleven years' observations, has shewn that the spots near the equator revolve in a shorter time than those of higher latitudes, and that this retardation of angular motion is subject to a law more or less definite. His formula gives 24.98 days as the sidereal period of rotation at the sun's equator, and 26.57 days at latitude thirty degrees, beyond which very few spots have been noticed in either hemisphere. Sir John Herschel considers it reasonable to suppose that the body of the sun rotates with a velocity equal to that of its photosphere at the equator—that is, in 25 days, and that the different rates of movement thus indicated in different regions of the solar atmosphere, together with known differences in temperature, are results from that general state of disturbance indicated by the proper motions of the spots and other phenomena. The same philosopher attributes the differences in the periods of the spots, and of the same spot in successive transits, to the different velocity of rotation proper to higher latitudes, and to the effects of the proper motion of a spot in altering its latitude. Thus, he says, the fact that a spot in 1857 was observed to

revolve four times in periods of 25.46, 25.67, 25.83, and 26.23 days, is to be explained by the force of its proper motion driving it into higher latitudes.

Some of the most interesting facts regarding sun-spots relate to the periodicity of their prevalence. The region of spots is at times speckled all over for two or three days continuously; in other years, no spots are to be seen for many days. While we write, only one small spot appears on the solar disc, appearing under the telescope of the size of a pin-head; but in 1860, spots were seen every day, and in great numbers. And in the year 1870-71, any person, with the aid of a good field-glass, properly screened, will be able to see some of the spots which will then mottle the face of the sun. We are able to make such a prediction in accordance with a law announced in 1843 by Professor Schwabe of Dessau. He made spot-observations from 1826 to 1860 on about 300 days in each year; and found that, in the years 1833, 1843, 1844, and 1856, there were, on fully half the days of observation, no spots on the solar disc, and few at any time during these years—not more than thirty groups in all. But in each of the years 1828, 1838, 1848, and 1859-60, there were about 300 groups—the sun being always spotted. This observed recurrence at intervals of about eleven years of a *maximum* and intervening *minimum* number of spots as indicating periodic seasons of solar disturbance, or *activity*, as it has been called, was fully tested by Professor Wolf of Zürich, who examined all recorded sun-spot observations from the time of Galileo downwards. For he has shewn that, for the last 254 years, the *maxima* and *minima* of sun-spots have each, with little variation, recurred at intervals of eleven one-fifth years; and that the minimum disturbance is not precisely in the middle of the period between any two *maxima*, but in the sixth or seventh year of that eleven-year space. Thus, while the number of spots reached a maximum in 1859-60, it will decrease till 1866-67, and then increase till 1870-71.

Again, the degree of maxima and minima variations is subject to a marked increase at periods of fifty-six years—a fluctuation undoubtedly due, as Mr Carrington suggests, to the action of the planets in certain positions, especially of Jupiter, on that belt of matter called the zodiacal light; and it is indeed to be regretted that the proposal of Major Jacob, to establish an observatory at Purandhur, in India, for simultaneous observations of sun-spots and the zodiacal light, has never been carried out. It was observed, and, we think, demonstrated, by General Sabine, that the fluctuations, in corresponding periods, of the amount of variation of the earth's magnetism are at least due to the same causes which produce the double variation we have mentioned in sun-spottedness; and we have every reason to hope that the daily photographs of both phenomena which are regularly taken at Kew, will lead to important developments in the science of magnetism.

Those induced currents of electricity in the upper and rarer strata of the atmosphere that are known as *auroræ*, have long been known to accompany certain earth-currents affecting our telegraphy, and certain states of the weather affecting our most intimate every-day interests; and it is a most remarkable fact that the numbers of *auroræ* and of sun-spots increase and diminish together.

But, before accepting as a fixed result in this splendid field of inquiry that the sun's influence is maintained and regulated by the waste and wear of that planetary system which it appears to sustain, we must await further research to trace more clearly the co-ordinate changes of the earth and sun, and be satisfied the while that thus, and through many other unthought-of media, is our present condition governed by influences which involve our destiny, and life and death perpetually harmonised.

DRIVEN OVERBOARD.

NATURE having given me a disposition inclined to a roving and adventurous life, and fate having gratified my foolish inclinations by making me a sailor, after leading a checkered existence in various parts of the world, I found myself, towards the close of the year 1861, in that strange, out-of-the-way Chinese port, Ningpo; found myself also captain and sole owner of one of those round-bottomed, swift, piratical-looking craft to which the Portuguese have given the name of *lorcha*.

Fair to the nautical eye were the proportions of my *Queen Mary*; low, rakish, and light in hull and spars; snowy white her new American cotton-canvas wings; formidable her two twelve-pounder brass guns.

At the period referred to, I had not tested the *lorcha* by a sea-voyage, and only knew of her sailing qualities by repute. All aboard, however, was ship-shape, and I was eagerly on the look-out for *pidgin* (business), when welcome news came among the little fleet of coasting-vessels thronging the port, to the effect that the incorrigible Taiping rebels meditated an attack upon the island of Chusan, which lies some score and a half miles to the eastward.

This rumour, to us, meant business indeed; and skippers were soon dodging about from boat to boat, seeking information as to who intended sailing for the island, borrowing or lending munitions of war, and getting everything prepared to bring to a haven of security any luckless Chusanite disposed to flee the avenging Taiping.

A curious and a motley set were those same skippers or boat-captains, representing, as they did, nearly every nationality. All assembled on board the largest *lorcha* (the captain of which, by the tacit consent of the masters of the smaller craft, became a sort of honorary commodore of the fleet and president of the council), to settle finally the order of going, and the ways thereof.

The pirate *Ti-mungs* (large sea-going war-junks) were cruising, some one said, as thick as monkeys in the Strait of Baffleman, where a ship cannot square her yards for them; and the notorious A-pak (the terror of the north-east coast) was declared to have a large fleet as hard at work as the much-abused Davy Jones in a gale of wind.

Talking of pirates, many a legend, many a deadly encounter, and many a wonderful escape came to be narrated. One long Yankee favoured us with the exhibition of a dozen jagged slugs, that had been extracted from where they had been carefully deposited in different parts of his body by the bucaners of the south coast. Another member of the council had lost two fingers and a nose; while some one else deposed to having had his ears cut off, and sent to his friends in an envelope, as a gentle intimation of what was in reserve if the demanded ransom were not forth-

coming. Then the murder of poor B— (who had been nailed to the deck of his own boat, and in that position horribly mutilated) was animadverted upon with grim rage. Nearly every one had some desperate affair to relate, sufficiently terrible, even after allowing for the elaboration in which the traveller and adventurer usually delight.

Our beverage, that afternoon, was fiery Hollands gin, poured from comfortable-looking square-faced black bottles into cracked tumblers, china tea-cups, and empty tin percussion-cap boxes—our host being weak in the crockery line—indeed, the last-comer solaced himself from a large glass ink-bottle, but then he was skipper of some very diminutive 'hooker.'

As we smoked our well-seasoned and altogether disreputable-looking black pipes, and imbibed the above-mentioned nectar, the theme of our discourse flitted to the homes we had left across thousands of miles of ocean, and we lifted up our voices to curse the Celestials (Chinese), and praise the favoured lands to which pertained the honour and glory of producing ourselves. It was no less paradoxical than affecting to hear those swarthy men, 'bearded as the pard,' swearing very 'strange oaths,' lower their rough voices, and speak reverently of some place or person in the far-distant old country, from which they had been wanderers so long without forgetting, and the memories of which still possessed the power to excite, perhaps, the only gentle feeling in their coarse, wild nature. They were not, however, of the temper long to remain sentimental, and before I left them, were roaring deep-toned bacchanalian ditties with a diversity of tongues that could scarcely have been surpassed at the tower of Babel.

The following morn came bright and clear; and before the early sun had driven the light hoarfrost from the decks, the *Queen Mary* was underweigh, bound, with many other vessels, to Chusan. Unfortunately, whilst dropping down the river, we fouled the ground-tackle of a large ship at anchor, and so, being unable to get clear for some time, I had the melancholy satisfaction to see the rest of the fleet skimming away without me. Away they flew, with fair wind and tide—schooners, lorchas, junks, every imaginable rig and flag, they gradually disappeared, leaving me with my new vessel to make the voyage alone and unsupported.

I had a Chinese crew, the only white man on board besides myself being young Harley, the mate—a cool hand; a strange, reckless, likeable American from the old 'Palmetto State;' sharp as a needle, and perfectly fearless.

Having lost an anchor before getting clear of the ship, and being unable to replace it until the next day, we were obliged to remain for the night at Ningpo. Towards the small-hours of the morning, I was not a little startled at being aroused by Harley's voice. It was a sharp cry, and made me sit up in my berth just in time to see him vanish on deck, taking the cabin-lamp with him, and leaving me in darkness. I sang out to know what was the matter, and whilst listening for a reply, heard the signal-halyards thrown down on deck, succeeded by the creaking noise of something being hoisted aloft. I was not only very sleepy, but also very lazy, as most people are at such a time in the morning, and so, simply keeping the blankets clear of my ears, instead of turning

out from my warm berth to experience the frosty air on deck, I very patiently waited for some indication of what the mate was about. I heard the signal-halyards whistle through the block as whatever had been hoisted was rapidly lowered down; then Harley returned to the cabin. He still carried the lamp, and, as he fumbled with the lanyard while hanging it up again, I could see that his hands were trembling, and that his face was very pale. Just then, he turned towards my berth, and, seeing that I was watching him, cried: 'Skipper, I've had such an awful dream!'

'By all that's decent, Harley,' I sharply answered, 'turn in, and go to sleep. If you would trouble the brandy-bottle a trifle less frequently, you would not wake respectable people at unearthly hours with the horrors. Bah! stow yourself away beneath the blankets again.'

'Harry, old fellow,' he quietly replied, 'light your pipe, and listen to me for a moment: I must speak to you.'

I did as he wished, though somewhat sulkily, and awaited his explanation with curiosity.

'I guess you know I've been a pretty wild fish?' said he inquiringly.

I nodded, quite believing that.

'Yes, there's no mistake, I was wild and foolish; but in that dream it seemed as though I were at home again. Father, mother—all were there just as I left them. Fan, too—you've heard me speak of Fan?'

Again I motioned my assent readily enough. Poor fellow! In our softer moments, he had often bored me with this 'Fan.'

'Well,' continued he, 'it seemed that I was happy and innocent again. My bad doings—a good many—were all forgotten and forgiven. Happy, ay, I was happy! Suddenly something whispered that I was to die—to die! when everything seemed so fair and bright; and when, the first time for many a year, I did so long for life, all was to be ended for ever! There—I don't know how to explain myself, but, O Harry, I feel that I shall never see home again!' The great drops were standing on his brow, and his eyes filled as he repeated: 'I shall never see home again—never! But, thank God! they have forgiven me.'

'And the cabin-lamp: why did you take it on deck?'

'Harry,' said he, 'I guess I was not rightly awake. In that dream I thought I saw my poor old mother looking across the sea for me; and this, I think, made me partly hoist the lantern to the mast-head, so that she might see the lorcha.'

That strange reply did not excite my ridicule; and though I tried to soothe his excitement by a very hollow laugh at what I termed a mere dream, I could not help feeling a secret misgiving for the fate of this poor fellow, who spoke so quaintly and so earnestly—so very earnestly. My own home longings had lately been tugging at my heart-strings. I gave him my hand, and what little comfort I was able. Not long ago, a dear friend had sung, as it were, his death-song in my ear; I vividly remembered how speedily and how fatally his presentiments had been verified. I tried to make Harley forego this Chusan trip, but he only said: 'Guess I'd rather kick the bucket alongside a friend;' winding up his laconic argument with this piece of philosophy: 'what must be must be, I reckon.'

We cleared our cables on the following morning, and were once more underweigh.

A friend of mine, a Canton-man, who owned a large *Ti-mung*, was also bound to Chusan; and with him I entered into an alliance offensive and defensive, agreeing to start together and sail in company. This same native skipper was a jolly and sociable old fellow, and exceedingly brave without (whilst safely in port).

'Look here, Massa Ha-le,' he had said in the course of conversation, 'mi no fear that—piecee pilong' [pirates] 'one smallo piecee! S'pose he come, mi fightee he; kill aller piecee man chop, chop' [quickly].

We sailed faster than our Canton consort; and when abreast of the town of Chinhae (situated at the mouth of the river, some twelve miles below Ningpo), were more than half a mile ahead. We held on our course, straight out between the grim rocks guarding the river's bar, and the old *Ti-mung* followed in our wake. A fair wind whistled loudly in the offing as, with all sail set, the *Queen Mary's* sticks bent bravely to it.

Such coasting-vessels as mine always carry a Chinese captain and pilot, or *lowder*, as he is named, on whom the steering, and generally the working of the ship, devolve. In Ningpo I had discharged my old *lowder* for misconduct, but the rest of the crew, with one exception, had sailed with me before. The stranger was a wolf-limbed, sharp-featured Chinese mariner, who had been picked up in some tea-shop, or perhaps an opium den. My boy (*æt. fifty*), Jim by name, though more frequently called by his other English sobriquet, the 'Angel'—how he obtained that interesting and euphonious cognomen deponent sayeth not—was himself a Chusan-man, and by long experience afloat, knew every turn of the coast, every set of the strong currents, therefore had I installed him as *lowder pro tem*. Jim had a moon-faced Mrs Jim, as well as several equally moon-faced, interesting little Jims residing in the island; and although, when I asked whether he liked the prospect of a voyage to Chusan, he answered with oriental humility: 'S'pose master likee, mi likee; s'pose master no likee, mi no likee,' I could yet see, by the twinkle of his oblique little black eyes—as he made the men now away taut the halyards, now drag at the sheet—that a meeting with the Celestial beauty and her scantily clothed progeny would be decidedly to his taste.

I had heard that Jim had been suspected of having done a little pirating in his younger days; but, in spite of this, and the fact that he was an inveterate opium-smoker when ashore, he proved a faithful servant to me, and one who watched my interests with the greatest attention. Whatever might be the time I called him, day or night, he would always promptly appear, and there, before me, he would stand, composing his great smooth face into an air of tranquil and respectful deference, while ready and willing to execute my slightest wish. He would often rise, unbidden, in the middle of the night, and come to my berth, as he said, 'to look see how master was.' More than once, when I have been lying awake, shivering with cold, has he voluntarily obtained extra blankets wherewith to cover up the chilly 'white demon,' as his countrymen call us; covering him up too, and tucking him in, with almost feminine tenderness—so these few lines are but a just tribute to his worth.

We were still bowling along before the breeze, which, however, was beginning to lull, when I observed my Canton friend's *Ti-mung* 'hauling her

wind,' and putting back for Chinhae. Jim explained that the skipper's courage was fleeing with the wind—his braggadocio not sufficing to make him relish the idea of knocking about the pirate-infested bays and creeks during a calm night. It was a serious consideration whether I, too, had not better return; but as both pride and pocket argued the other way, they vanquished prudence, and on we stood.

The Angel's eyes were anxiously watching the sails, and he seemed determined to take advantage of every breath of air, as he devoted himself to his duties at the helm. Ere long, back came mainsail and foresail with that sudden heavy flap which, to the mariner's ear, speaks so meaningfully of approaching calm. We were within a couple of miles of the indented coast, and had made but little further progress, when I noticed that the crew were intently gazing shoreward: upon glancing in the same direction, I saw two black and wicked-looking boats riding at anchor in a sheltered little bay.

A very short scrutiny satisfied the Angel. 'Jaundow,' cried he emphatically, in the Ningpo dialect. My own experience was sufficient to make me credit his assertion that the strangers were pirates. Then, as in the present day, the whole coast swarmed with them.

All hands were quickly mustered, as we at once proceeded to beat to quarters with a Chinese gong. The new hand shipped at Ningpo made himself particularly active; his face wore an exceedingly fearless expression—an expression of mingled irony and exultation. He flew to the mast-head with the rapidity of a monkey, and prepared for use the *stink-pots** hanging there.

Jim's attention was again riveted on the sails, and he scarcely gave a second glance at the two boats that were now hoisting their brown mat-sails, and putting out after us. Hardly a zephyr ruffled the surface of the sea; and the pirates, being of lighter build than the *Queen Mary*, as well as sculling four large oars apiece, were rapidly gaining on us.

At length the foremost boat arrived within two or three hundred yards; and then, taking a careful aim with the after-gun, I fired, and had the satisfaction to see the splinters fly as the shot took effect. Still the pirate steadily held her course, and presented so small a mark end on, whilst her crew were safely concealed behind thick shot-proof bamboo mats in the stern, that our guns were comparatively useless. My own crew, with the exception of Jim and the new hand (whose name was A-sing), began to manifest unequivocal symptoms of fear—their yellow skins turning to a pale unhealthy blue. Harley was only able to prevent them deserting their stations, and running below, by presenting a loaded revolver and threatening to shoot the first who attempted to do so.

Soon we could hear the whooping of the pirates at their oars, as they rapidly shortened the distance between us. Harley and myself were kneeling with our rifles rested, only waiting for the appearance of a man on the deck of either boat: we were perfectly well aware that if we once allowed them

* These stink-pots are small earthen jars filled with a very combustible composition. Lighted charcoal or joss-stick is placed on the concave top; the contrivance is then enveloped in a thin bag, and thrown by the string, as a hand-grenade, breaking when it strikes anything, and then emitting the most suffocating fumes, besides burning everything within reach.

to get within stinkpot range, it would be all up with us. Our opportunity came at last. One fellow, impatient to board, and not having a proper fear of English powder and rifle-range, forsook the safe cover of the mats, and walked to the forepart of one of the pursuing vessels, where he began preparing various instruments for grappling. Harley's eye was upon him; we knew full well how much depended on the first shot; nevertheless, confidently came that amiable Celestial. Already, in anticipation, he smells the blood of the 'foreign devils,' but he cannot divine the imminence of his own fate, or the deadly and almost imperceptible movement whence proceeds the danger. The brown muzzle of Harley's rifle shifts just a little to the left, and a hairbreadth higher. A sharp, ringing crack! And when that little column of white smoke clears away I see upon the mate's face a self-satisfied, determined expression: some hundred yards astern there floats the dusky carcass of a Chinaman, with a large red patch near the heart—a man and a brother, doubtless, but neatly potted, very!

That rifle-crack seems to have released the wind. The Angel, cool as a cucumber, gathers his men to take a pull at the mainsheet, and the canvas once more fills to a particularly welcome breeze. Harley's shot, too, seems to have given our recreant tars fresh courage, and as we begin to leave the pirates far astern, their bravery is quite refreshing: they loudly congratulate each other upon the valour they have displayed, and vow, with terrific Chinese maledictions, to cut out and devour the heart of any Jaun-dow foolish enough to tackle them.

At about 5 P.M., the pirates being quite out of sight, Harley and myself went below to dinner in the cabin; after which, we lay down, and had an hour's sleep, knowing that our utmost vigilance would be required during the night, so multitudinous were the pirates in the vicinity of Chusan, and so active their operations during the darkness.

Harley was the first to wake up, and when he aroused me, we went on deck together. The tide was running slack, and the wind had fallen quite light again. The Angel was lying stretched out in a blanket near his assistant at the helm. The moon had not risen, and the night was profoundly dark: this would have been a matter for congratulation, but, to our horror, we had only been enjoying our cheroots a few moments, when we discovered that the mast-head light was hoisted and burning brightly. The Angel was instantly aroused from his slumber, and surprised us by declaring that he had given the crew strict orders *not* to hoist that lantern, and also be careful that they did not display any other. The lamp was quickly hauled down, and all hands were mustered, but not a man would own to having touched it. Eventually, I knew who to blame, but at that time had no suspicion.

Having given the necessary instructions to extinguish every light on board, I remained on deck to see that my orders were obeyed, so that our whereabouts might not be betrayed to lurking dishonesty; if, indeed, such a misfortune had not already taken place, as it was quite possible that our late assailants had followed us, and, by keeping close inshore, passed ahead, so as to have seen our light. As a further precaution, I instructed Harley to employ several men at drawing water with which to keep the decks thoroughly wet, so as to extin-

guish any stink-pots that might come. But I knew that, if we were attacked, our chance of escape would be but small indeed: two Europeans would not be able to work the guns without assistance, and our Chinese mariners would be perfectly useless in the dark.

Over our dinner, I had asked Harley whether he could swim, and, in answer to his look of surprise, had stated my fear that such a contingency as taking to the water for our lives was far from being improbable ere another sun had risen. My companion had replied that he could swim a little, and I had promised to give him all the assistance in my power, should we be unfortunate enough to experience so desperate an emergency.

Having buckled on our cutlasses and revolvers, we placed our easy-chairs on the weather-side of the quarter-deck, and sat straining our eyes at the deep darkness, whilst yarning in a broken manner of friends and home so far away.

I should imagine that nearly half an hour had passed away when Harley and the Angel suddenly gave the alarm together; the latter, from his post at the helm, crying: 'Jaun-dow li, Jaun-dow li!' and the former seizing me tightly by the arm, and exclaiming: 'Pirates, by the Eternal!'

Even as they spoke, my ear plainly distinguished the distant creaking of the heavy *yulos* (large oars, generally thrust out astern, and sculled backwards and forwards on the screw principle). We sprang to our feet, and our half-dozen rifles were on deck within a couple of minutes. Then the mate stood by the after-gun, all his temper 'riz' at the notion of a free fight. Two or three of the crew—A-sing among them—lent a hand. Then, as a large black hull loomed up on our weather-beam, I asked: 'Are you ready with the gun?'

'All ready!' cried the mate.

'Then fire!'

Down went the match—a second's suspense—and the roar of the polished brazen destroyer echoed loud and ringing through the still night-air; but, alas! the gun being double-shotted, the recoil was so great as to carry away its trunnion-bands, when it flew up from the carriage, and fell on deck.

'Never mind, Harley,' said I; 'run forward, and let them have the contents of the other gun. Keep her away a couple of points, Jim.'

I waited. Down went the match, but the gun hung fire.

'Bear a hand there, Harley—bear a hand,' I shouted impatiently, for the suspicious vessels were getting alarmingly near. 'What is the matter? Fire! fire!'

The mate came aft, quietly picking his way, and said: 'By the Eternal, capt'n, the foremost gun is spiked! I reckon some of the crew have just done this.'

The pirates were now within pistol-range, and through the gloom we saw the long dark shadows of other boats following the nearest. There was nothing left us but to take our rifles and trust to Providence, though we could hardly expect to be able to do more than sell our lives dearly. Chinese pirates shew no mercy.

At this moment, and whilst the approaching vessels seemed 'laying-to'—probably to make final arrangements before closing with us—the man A-sing came aft. We were leaning against the cabin skylight, waiting for the pirates to shew a light (which we knew they would soon require, Chinese fashion, to see us by), when he came up,

grinning and chuckling as he said: 'Mi chin-chin you; mi hang lamp; mi putee nail inside gun. Just now mi go friend; by-em-by come back, *sar*, *sar!* for you two piecee head.'

He sawed the air sideways with his hand, to illustrate the pleasing meaning of *sar, sar!* and then made two or three active leaps to the gunnel. Another moment, and the wretch would have taken to the water, and been safe with his friends the pirates, for I was too much surprised to stop him; but just then a sharp report rang in my ears, one shrill cry was heard, and the traitor fell in-board, shot dead by Harley's 'six-shooter.' My friend then proposed the following problem, with the air of a man propounding a serious metaphysical difficulty: 'Can you tell me why a fellow, when he has done a dirty trick, must nearly always brag about it?' He turned the yellow betrayer over with his foot, and continued: 'I thought you were a bad lot anyhow, and kept a "weather-eye lifting." Wall, you sold us twice, but I reckon we're quits now. Darned skunk!'

The discovery of the treachery made us both 'kinder riled,' as Harley expressed it.

The pirates were now rounding to under our stern, and lighting, as we expected, great torches. We loaded and fired as quickly as possible, now and then getting a good chance to deliver a dead-shot. Nor were our assailants backward in replying, for their missiles came rattling heavily about us.

'Shoot straight—shoot straight, darn ye!' yelled Harley excitedly. But then, whiz came stink-pot number one. Being nearly amidsthips, it did not affect us, though Jim (whom we could discern by the fitful red glare still faithful at his post) must have been sadly burned.

Now, for the first time, a panic seemed to seize poor Harley; he suddenly called to me in a low, hurried voice: 'Capt'n! my dream! I see it all now: this is to be the end. Let us jump—let us swim for it!' He sprang to the side.

'Hold on a bit, Harley,' said I. 'Let me have another shot—one more yellow devil—and then we'll be off.'

I picked up my own particular rifle, not yet used; I had not long to wait. Taking a steady aim at a wretch holding a flaring torch in one hand, and swinging a stink-pot in the other, I pulled the trigger, and saw him spring several feet in the air. Then I bawled: 'Come on, Harley—come on!' And, in fact, the dread reality of being within a few moments of death by hacking dawned upon me, so infectious is fear. I could not see my friend, though I looked eagerly around. As for the crew, with the exception of the Angel, they had long since stowed themselves away.

The Angel called to me: 'Typho [mate] have go downside water.'

'Come along, then, Jim; let us follow him: be quick,' I shouted.

'Master, my no can; mi too muchee burn. Chin-chin you, more better go just now.'

Bump came the bow of the foremost pirate against our stern, and her crew began clambering on board. I threw off my monkey-jacket, and quietly dropped overboard, heavy sea-boots and all, there being no time to undress now. I held on to a rope for a couple of seconds, whilst shouting for Harley; but not meeting with any response, I put my feet to the lorch's side, audibly muttered 'Good-bye,' and commending myself to God, kicked out well under water.

I knew that the pirates had seen me, by the shower of bullets splashing around when I came to the surface. Fortunately, they failed to strike me, and the night was so dark that in a few moments I was out of sight. I swam the first fifty yards at a rate that would doubtless have insured me the champion's belt at the Lambeth baths, being nerved thereto by the dread that the pirates might send a boat after me; then I remembered that my chance of reaching the land would be very forlorn, unless I moderated the spurt, especially as I was much encumbered with clothing. I knew, by old swimming-match experience, that the winning-stroke was long and easy.

Boots, I felt, were unnecessary appendages at such a time; so, quietly seizing the water-logged casing of my left extremity, I sank, and removed it. A moment to blow, and then down for the right foot. Trousers followed in the same way, though the difficulty of removing them was greater; indeed, they clung around my feet in such tenacious manner that I began to wonder whether I had wronged the tailor, and so, by an act of retributive justice, was to meet my death through the medium of an article of his construction. I next tore off my underclothing (which, thanks to the Ningpo washermen, was of material tender and flimsy). Then I bent my head on my shoulder, and struck out in the old racing style.

The first quarter of an hour nearly finished me; after that, my strength and breathing improved, though the stroke became so monotonous that I almost began to doze. I remember singing in a humming, droning sort of way, feeling also that my face wore a more than usually vacant expression.

After a time, the excitement died away, and I realised the fact that the water was very cold. Then came a terrible idea. What is the use of this eternal grind, grind? Better raise up my arms, and sink quietly down. I wondered whether it would be suicide if I did so, since there seemed not the faintest prospect of ever reaching the land.

Suddenly, the full horror of the situation burst upon my disordered mind. Here was I, a poor, helpless mortal, floating, drifting in the deep stillness and darkness of the night—God alone knew whither—perhaps far out to sea. I speculated in the same dreary, helpless sort of way as to how the end would come. Dashed, should I be, against some sharp jagged rocks; mangled by the cruel shark (and this thought sent a thrill through my frame, such as can only be imagined by those who have had a swim for life against him); or would some swiftly rushing tide carry me into the 'chow-chow' water, there to be whirled round and round for a few brief seconds, and then be sucked down to a large still pool with the loathsome dead bodies of other drowned men?

The apparent hopelessness of the situation seemed to paralyse me. I thought a prayer, rested my arms from their wearisome exertions, and sank down, down, deeper and deeper yet. The first terrible sensation of drowning was upon me; but then, clear through the dense water, tangible, soft, even imploring, came the face of one dearest to me on earth. My energies revived; my body, too, regained the surface, where, during a few moments of confusion, I floundered like an ungainly Newfoundland. Thank Heaven, I managed to keep myself afloat, and, before striking out again, cleared my eyes of salt water. I had previously been swimming

on my side, so now paused to gaze around for the first time. The moon was just rising over a bank of—cloud? No! There, right before me—making my heart throb with joy and courage—land loomed large and clear!

All my strength, all my love of life returned. Inspired with hope, I swam vigorously towards the shore. I could now discern the dim outline of a large boat lying in the mouth of a creek, and my joy was redoubled when I found that a strong tide was sweeping me nearer to the beach. Soon afterwards I heard voices, talking, vociferating, as only your true Chinese can; threateningly, I fancied, they sounded; but my great exertions were producing complete exhaustion, so I struggled onward. I could now barely keep my head above water, when suddenly my foot struck something hard. It is mother-earth—earth at last! I tried to stand up, but only fell helplessly about. Then, through the shallow water, with a rush and a loud splashing, there cometh a Chinaman. 'Keep off, wretch, keep off!' I feebly cry. He wont, and is friendly.

In a short time, I recovered my senses, and found myself lying, enveloped in sheep-skins, the centre of an admiring group of natives, who perhaps rejoiced, but who certainly shouted. It was out of the nature of things for me to resist thanking that Power (not poor dumb 'Joss,' to whom the surrounding people ascribed my wonderful deliverance) which had saved me; but when I had done so, the carnal man being still unsubdued, I shook my fist in the direction of the pirates at sea. This proceeding elicited a round of applause from the crowd, and procured me the sounding title of Tassin, that is, Great-heart, borrowed, I presume, from some Chinese *Pilgrim's Progress*.

Four stout fellows at once seized and carried me off towards their village in the hills.

Upon reaching the mud and straw-built hamlet, I was carried into the largest cottage—the residence of the venerable elder of the place. Ready hands assisted in placing me upon a couple of boards stretched over trellises, which, in this primitive household, constituted a bed. They then covered me with a huge cotton-stuffed quilt—dirty and not aromatic, but very welcome. Brass vessels filled with burning charcoal were placed underneath my couch; hot *laou-chou* (native wine) was poured down my throat, as well as vast quantities of scalding tea.

More than an hour elapsed before returning circulation warmed me, and rewarded the efforts of my kind attendants.

Very gravely the elders debated what was to be done with me, until I gave them to understand that it was my wish to proceed to Chusan, and that I would reward them for taking me there. I fell asleep muttering in their tongue, as far as I could speak it: 'Chusan go, I give dollars.'

In the morning, whilst waiting for the tide to permit my departure in a boat, numerous small natives took me into their possession, and, with every symptom of lively satisfaction, trotted me off to the sights of the village—commencing with the Buddhist temple, mud *ad infinitum*, and ending with the coffin-maker's shop, mud as before. At length, after numerous farewells, and spasmodic attempts on my part to express the gratitude I felt, we cast off, made sail, and were away.

At four o'clock in the afternoon I had the satisfaction to reach Chusan, and once more see the red ensign of old England fluttering in the breeze.

The captain of the lorch to which we steered did not at first recognise me in my Chinese rig; but when assured of my identity, nothing could have been kinder than the welcome he gave me. After well paying my Chinese friends for their trouble, and thereby rejoicing their hearts, I bade them adieu.

I have little more to narrate. That night, while sitting over unexceptionable cognac and cheroots in the cabin, a voice called me on deck. Proceeding there, who should I find but the Angel—aghast at what he considered my supernatural escape, and seemingly burned into one huge blister by stink-pots. At length he was able to exclaim: 'O master, mi too muchee glad! Hi-ya! you have swim too muchee long way! O master—now fairly blubbing—'mi before too muchee sorry; mi tinkee you have makee die.'

'All right, Jim; thank Heaven, we are both safe,' said I. 'But where is Harley?'

'Master, Harley have makee die. He no go water long a you; he makee hide. By-em-by, Jaundow li [come]; cut, cut, cut; too muchee knife. Harley makee little fightee; no good. He jump now; no good. Too muchee sick; allo cut; no can walkee [swim]. Harley have go downside die.'

The pirate had let Jim off to make terms for the ransom of the *Queen Mary*, he said; but I could not help thinking that he might have met an old *camarade*, who had spoken a good word for him.

'Well, Jim, you too muchee burn, eh?'

'Yes, master,' replied he, blubbing again, 'but mi no care, master no have die. Ma-se-ke [never mind], mi pay Joss one numbah one chin-chin.'

And in another moment he would have been kissing my feet. I was 'green' then in China, and occasionally treated the natives as fellow-men—beings with souls as well as myself—and some of them rather liked it; I think the Angel did.

Three months later, there came, from an old plantation in South Carolina, kind words and forgiveness for him who rested, hacked and quiet, at the bottom of the Chinese seas.

THE DAUNTLESS BIRD.

The waters roar among the woods;
With heavy swing the torrent comes;
In the green meadows stand the floods;
The birds have left their mossy homes;
The sea-gull inland waves his wings;
On a bare branch the Robin sings.

The blossoms blue on sunken bank,
The red that leave a seeded urn,
With golden kings have fallen in rank;
And brown as cedar is the fern;
And every cloud a shower brings;
Unblenching still the Robin sings.

And he hath known the tender veils
On April trees, the summer limes,
The moonlit songs of nightingales,
The azure depths of happier times;
And now the howl of Winter rings,
But still the dauntless Robin sings.

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH. Also sold by all Booksellers.